

# SAINT GEORGE.


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## EDITORIAL NOTE.

HE Council of the Ruskin Society of Birmingham regards the issue of a Quarterly Journal, of which this is the first number, as a necessary auxiliary to its work. That Society was founded to promote the study of Mr. Ruskin's works, and to influence public opinion, in relation to Arts and Ethics, on lines which he has indicated, and thus to encourage the higher life of which he is so eloquent a prophet. Although the Society has not yet completed the second year of its existence, it has been attended with a remarkable and gratifying success. It has been especially fortunate in securing for its lecturers scholarly and able exponents of the master's teaching, and it will be the chief aim of the conductors of this Journal to preserve, for the benefit of the members of the Society itself, as well as of the general public, the papers and addresses delivered by these distinguished members of the Ruskin brotherhood. But our work will not stop here. We hope to chronicle and advance local or national movements which tend to promote the ideals set before us in Mr. Ruskin's writings. We shall review, quarter by quarter, works dealing with Ruskinian or kindred subjects which come within the scope of our aims. Thus we hope that *Saint George* will help to foster a closer relationship at once among the various Ruskin Societies, and among the many individual followers who are not on the roll of any such society.

We hope, too, that it may find a response within the breasts of those who feel some divine discontent with our present social system, built upon competition—the Law of Death—and who yearn for the “rich dawn of an ampler day” when, in mutual co-operation and service, there shall be substituted the Law of Life.

## THE IDEAL WOMAN OF THE POETS.\*

By the Very Rev. Charles W. Stubbs, D.D. (Dean of Ely).

### I.



ORD TENNYSON, in his *Dream of Fair Women*, in the very first stanza of that beautiful lyric, speaks of Chaucer's *Legende of Good Women*, and thereby surely reminds us that with the poets themselves there has been what one may not unfitly call an apostolic succession of ministry in Praise of Woman.

Let us begin then, as Lord Tennyson himself did, with Chaucer's Legend. In the late Laureate's dream, Iphigenia, Jephthah's daughter, Queen Eleanor, were doubtless good women, and Helen, and Cleopatra, and Fair Rosamond were certainly beautiful, but

"Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath  
Preluded those melodious bursts that fill  
The spacious times of great Elizabeth  
With sounds that echo still,"

ushers us I think into a wider realm, and perhaps into nobler presences.

Consider for a moment or two the Prologue to his Legend. You will note how the apostolic succession, of which I spoke, comes in, for Chaucer in setting forth to tell us the story of nineteen good women of his own choice has evidently in his mind both the poem on illustrious women, *De Mulieribus Claris* by Boccaccio, and also Ovid's *Heroides*. But from the hundred and five tales of Boccaccio Chaucer borrows very little beyond the outline of the stories. To Ovid he is much more indebted, for he frequently translates whole passages both from the *Heroides*

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and the *Metamorphoses*. It is remarkable however that neither Boccaccio nor Ovid tell the story of Alkestis, and neither indeed does Chaucer himself fully tell it, for his nineteen tales of good women never got beyond the ninth—and whence he learnt the story of Alkestis we know not certainly. And yet it was around that story that Chaucer had intended to group all the other legends of his good women, and it was to Alkestis, purest type of perfect wifehood, transformed by Chaucer's fancy into the Daisy Queen, and with complimentary allusions also to his own patroness, the Princess Anne, Queen of Richard the II., that the poet himself traced his inspiration.

There is one quaintly beautiful passage in that Prologue which you must let me read to you. It may fitly furnish the concluding paragraph of this preface to my lecture, and as fitly prelude what must be our real starting point in that antique realm of Grecian poetry, where, in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, Homer paints for us the pictures of immortal women—Helen, Andromache, Penelope, Calypso, Circe, Nausicaa—or where

“Our Euripides the human  
With his droppings of warm tears  
And his touches of things common  
Till they rise to touch the spheres,”

tells us in that tragedy which is perhaps the masterpiece of Greek poetry of that noblest type of wifely sacrifice in the Alkestis.

Here however, before we pass on to the themes, are Chaucer's words. He begins by telling how, while sleeping in a meadow strewn with daisies, he had a vision of the Queen and received a message :

“The god of love, and in his hand a queen,  
Clothēd in real habit all of green,  
A fret of gold she haddē next her hair,  
And upon that a white coroun she bare,  
With many flourēs, and I shall not lie  
For all the world, right as a daiseye  
Ycrownēd is with whitē leavēs light,

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So were the flourës of her coroun white.  
Her name was Alceste, the debonnaire,  
I pray to God that ever fall she fair;  
For, haddë comfort been of her presence,  
I had been dead, withouten any defence,  
For dread of Lovës wordës and his cheer,  
As, when time is, hereafter ye shall hear.  
Behind this god of love upon the green  
I saw coming of ladyës nineteen  
In real habit, a full easy pass,  
And after 'em come of women such a trass  
That sin that God—Adam made of carth,  
'The third part of women or the fourth  
Ne wend I not by possibility  
Had ever in this wide world ybe,  
And true of love these women were eschoon,  
Now whether was that a wonder thing or noon  
That right anon as that they gone espy  
This flower which that I clepe the dayseye  
Full suddenly they stinten all at once  
And kneeled down, as it were for the Nones,  
And singen with one voice—'Heal and Honour  
To truth of womanhood, and to this flower  
That berth our alder pris in figuring,  
Her white coroun berth the witnessing?'"

The poet imagines himself arraigned before the Queen and the God of Love. He is rebuked by Alkestis because hitherto in his poetry he has only told the tales of how women have done amiss:

"Was there no good matter in thy mind,  
Nor in all thy bookës couldest thou not find  
Some story of women that were good and true?  
Yes, God wot, sixty bookës old and new  
Hast thou thyself all full of stories great  
That bothë Romans and eek Greeckës treat  
Of sundry women, which life that they lad,  
And ever an hundred good again one bad."

And so as a penance the Queen sets him to write a glorious legend of goodë women: and as a final word she charges him:

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"Have them now in thy legend all in mind,  
For there be twenty thousand more sitting  
Than thou knowest, that be good women all  
And true of love for all that may befall.  
Make the metres of them as thou list,  
I must go home, the sunnē draweth west  
To Paradise, with all this company  
And serve alway the fresh dayseye."

### II.

Let us turn then to the Ideal of Womanhood as it is portrayed for us by the early Greek poets. It is only of course with the ideals, as we may interpret them for ourselves in the pictures drawn for us in the legendary and poetical period of ancient Greece, as reflected that is to say in the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey* of Homer, as perpetuated in those great masterpieces of literature, the tragedies of Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and from them directly transferred to the pages of western literature, that we can be concerned in this Lecture. It would be indeed foreign to my purpose, even if in a single lecture such a course were possible, to endeavour to trace, through the later historical periods of ancient Greece, and so on into modern European life, the gradual change in the conception and the position of womanhood which has been brought about by the advancing tide of Christian civilisation. I must be satisfied for my purpose to-night, in regard to the literature of both Greece of Rome, with recalling to you the great pictures of noble womanhood which have influenced our modern Ideals, not in the slow growth of European civilisation, but by direct transference, many ages after their production, from one literature to another. In regard to Greece, at any rate, it must be sufficient to note the perplexing moral fact that it was in the earlier and ruder and more barbarous, as we should say, periods of Grecian history, not in the later and more refined, that the ideal of womanhood is to be found in its highest perfection. "The strange mysterious beauty of Helen

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of Troy, [that daughter of adventure, that child of change], how young, how virginal, how pathetic: the conjugal tenderness of Andromache: the unwearied fidelity of Penelope, awaiting through the long revolving years the return of her storm-tossed husband [calm, true, steadfast as a heroine of Hebrew story]: the heroic love of Alkestis, voluntarily dying that her husband might live: the filial piety of Antigone: the majestic grandeur of the death of Polyxena: the more subdued and saintly resignation of Iphigenia, excusing with her last breath the father who had condemned her: the joyous, modest, loving Nausicaa, whose figure shines like a perfect idyll among the tragedies of the *Odyssey*—all these are pictures of perennial beauty, which Rome and Christendom, chivalry and modern civilisation, have neither eclipsed nor transcended."

And if, for purpose of more direct illustration, I must make choice among these, I do not hesitate to take the last and sweetest of all, the picture of Nausicaa, the perfect maiden, the purest, freshest, lightest-hearted girl in all Grecian romance.

How shall I tell the story? The shipwrecked Ulysses, fordone with toil and weariness, lies asleep on the rocky coast of Phœacia. The sea waves through which he has fared on his raft have wrought for him as it were a rough re-incarnation into the realities of life after his strange sojourn in the mystic grove of the goddess Calypso. The sea brine is the source of vigour, and into the sea waves he has cast, together with Calypso's raiment, all memory of her divine sweet voice.

Nausicaa, the daughter of Alcinous, King of the Phœacians, is asleep in her chamber, when the goddess Athene, intent on saving her favourite the shipwrecked Ulysses, comes down to earth, and warns the maiden in a dream that she should bestir herself, and go forth and wash her clothes against her marriage day. Here are Homer's words. I give them from Butcher and Lang's translation:

"Anon came the throned dawn, and awakened Nausicaa of the

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fair robes, who straightway marvelled on the dream, and went through the halls to tell her parents, her father dear and her mother. And she found them within, her mother sitting by the hearth with the women her handmaids, spinning yarn of sea purple stain, but her father she met as he was going forth to the renowned kings in their council whither the noble Phœacians called him. Standing close by her dear father she spake, saying: 'Father dear couldst thou not lend me a high wagon with strong wheels, that I may take the goodly raiment to the river to wash, so much as I have lying soiled? Yea, and it is seemly that thou thyself, when thou art with the princes in council, shouldest have fresh raiment to wear. Also there are five dear sons of thine, two married, but three are lusty bachelors, and these are always eager for new washen garments wherein to go to the dances; for all these things have I taken thought.'

"This she said because she was ashamed to speak of glad marriage to her father: but he saw all and answered saying: 'neither the mules nor aught else do I grudge thee my child. Go thy ways, and the thralls shall get thee ready a high wagon with good wheels, and fitted with an upper frame.'"

And so the Princess and her maidens jog downward through the olive gardens to the sea. The Princess holds the whip and drives, and when she reaches the stream's mouth by the beach, she loosens the mules from the shafts, and turns them out to graze in the deep meadow. Then the clothes are washed, and the luncheon is taken from the basket, and the game of ball begins. How the ball flew aside and fell into the water, and how the shrill cries of the damsels woke Ulysses from his sleep, you must read for yourselves. The girls are fluttered by the sight of the great naked man, rugged with brine and bruised with shipwreck. Nausicaa alone, as becomes a princess, stands her ground and questions him. The simple delicacy with which this situation is treated makes the whole episode one of the most charming in Homer. Very natural and not less noble is the change from pity

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to admiration expressed by the maiden, when Ulysses has bathed in running water and rubbed himself with oil and put on goodly raiment given him by the girls. Pallas Athene sheds true grace upon his form, and makes his hair to fall in clusters like hyacinth blossoms, so that an artist who moulds figures could not shape a comelier statue. The Princess, with yesternight's dream still in her soul, wishes that such an one might be called her husband. Girlishly simple and sweet and modest, intelligent and fearless, "quick to perceive the bearings of her strange and sudden adventure, quick to perceive the character of Ulysses, quick to answer his lofty and refined pleading by words as lofty and refined, and pious withal—for it is she who speaks to her maidens the once so famous words :

"Strangers and poor men all are sent from Zeus,  
And gifts, though small, are sweet"—

clear of intellect, sweet of temper, maidenly in reserve, fearlessly frank of speech—this is Nausicaa as Homer draws her, and as many a scholar and poet since Homer has accepted her, for the ideal of noble maidenhood.

Let me leave with you her last word spoken in the *Odyssey*, as she leans against the pillar of the banqueting hall and gazes at Ulysses as he passes to his place at the feast. Would to God its deeper meaning might be realised by every English maiden who, all unconsciously perhaps to herself, holds the future of her lover's fortune in life in her hand to make or mar. "Hail, guest, and be thou mindful of me, when perchance thou art in thine own land, for to me the first thou dost owe the price of life!"

#### IV.

We may pass even more rapidly, I think, through the picture gallery of illustrious women, painted for us by the poets of ancient Rome. For the Romans were not a poetic or ideal people, in the same kind or degree, as the Greeks had been. Their poetry

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appeals rather to the reason and the conscience and the will, not to the emotions and the soul, or to the spirit of romance that lies deep in every healthy human heart. Roman poetry is more authoritative, less speculative than that of the Greeks. Worldly Wisdom rather than Beauty is the Poetic Muse of Rome. And even in Horace, when he raises a discussion on the *summum bonum* of life, we are at once sensible of the vagueness of an ideal which relies on texts and moral maxims, rather than on the glowing act of some living personality for its attainment, and we feel at once the poetic limitation of the Roman mind. Social tact, personal reticence, judgment of character, the imperial spirit, the majesty of government, these are the topics loved by the Roman poet. Seldom indeed does he turn to deeds of passionate self-sacrifice, of enthusiastic heroism, of romantic love.

In regard to the ideals of womanhood therefore, the Roman poet never reached the lofty human conceptions of the Greek. In the Augustan age of Rome it was not perhaps surprising. For a nation, in whose greatest city there was dedicated on the Palatine Hill a temple to the goddess Viriplaca, the appeaser of husbands, always crowded by Roman matrons, among whom at one time according to the strange, but I fear not incredible story of Livy, there was discovered a vast conspiracy to poison their husbands, does not seem to offer likely ground for the growth of noble ideals of womanhood.

"Cæsar's wife should be above suspicion" is a fine saying no doubt. But the world has perhaps taken Cæsar a little too readily at his own word and has forgotten the outraged Pompeia, and failed to discern in the glittering and sounding generality the base slander of a man who was hunting for pretexts to divorce his wife. But there were good women no doubt among even the ladies of the Empire in the Augustan age. And yet few of them ever appear in the pages of Roman poetry. The women of Plautus are uniformly bad. Those in Terence are little better, and the only one among them, that I can remember, who ever did a good action,

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begs pardon of her husband when he convinces her of her criminality in doing it—"Mi Chreme, peccavi! Fatiore, Vincor"—"I was wrong, my Chremes; I own it, I am conquered." And her crime was that she had saved her child from being murdered. And Virgil,—What of Virgil?

' Roman Virgil, thou that singest Ilion's lofty temples robed in fire,  
Ilion falling, Rome arising, wars and filial faith and Dido's pyre;  
Landscape lover, lord of language, more than he that sang the 'Works and Days'  
All the chosen coin of fancy flashing out from many a golden phrase.

Wielder of the stateliest measure ever moulded by the lips of man."

What has he to say in praise of woman? Alas! alas! He falsifies alike both the era and the history of his noblest heroine Dido, to make her odious and contemptible. His Queen Amata is a turbulent and tippling shrew. The Princess Lavinia is undutiful and unbelieving. His goddesses are little better. Juno is always in a passion. Camilla is the only female figure of whom the poet begins to speak well, but he soon descends to a lower level, and shortly ends by calling her "aspera, horrenda virgo!"

As to Horace, it would puzzle anyone to find a decent woman in all his poems, unless indeed we except the lines in which he compliments Livia, the wife of Augustus, as "unico gaudens mulier marito," or the "splendide mendax et in omne virgo nobilis ævum" of the eleventh ode of his third book:

"One only, true to Hymen's flame,  
Was traitress to her sire forlorn:  
That splendid falsehood lights her name  
Through times unborn."

His ladies for the most part are all Chloes, Delias, Lyces, Lydias, Lalages, and Cynaras, and of most of them, I fear, it must be said that they added to the worship of Cupid that of Bacchus. And yet—and yet—for the sake of many a dear old bachelor don of the old school, gentlemen and scholars, one would like to forgive this prince of good comrades and fine

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talkers, his want of chivalry and heroine worship, and to think that after all perhaps his irony and cynicism may be in great part mere persiflage, and to remember that under the graceful gaiety of his epicurean maxims there is still a ground tone of sadness, as of one who felt "the riddle of the painful earth," and found its best solution, not in the gaiety and the wit and the *fugitiva gaudia* of a refined but empty society, but—to quote Wordsworth's lines of him—in

"The humblest note of those sad strains  
Drawn forth by pressure of his gilded chains,  
As a chance sunbeam from his memory fell  
Upon the Sabine farm he loved so well ;  
Or where the prattle of Bandusia's spring  
Haunted his ear, he only listening !"

"*He only*"—poor old bachelor!

Of Juvenal I need not speak. His trade was universal satire. He says somewhere that he had scarcely ever heard of a thoroughly modest woman since the golden age.

I must leave the ideals of Catullus, of Lucretius—the two greatest poets of the last age of the Republic, perhaps of any Roman age—and of Ovid and Propertius—the two greatest at the close of the Augustan age—unrepresented, although I could wish I had time to read you some passages from that noble elegy of Propertius, in which that poet imagines for us "the apology of Cornelia for her life," uttered before the judge of Hades. It is a fine ideal of Roman matronhood, a noble picture, if a little wanting in spontaneity and inspiration, of that dignity of manners, of that greatness of heart, of that piety of motherhood, which we instinctively feel, from the testimony of the great prose writers, and still more perhaps of the sculptured busts and statues which have come down to us, *must* have been realised in *some* of the women of the great Roman families in that otherwise corrupt age.

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### V.

It is not possible of course to mark out with absolute precision the chronology of a moral sentiment. But yet there can be little question I think that in the history of European civilisation, the change of sentiment with regard to the position of woman synchronises with the changes from Pagan to Christian influences. Are we right then in saying that Christianity instituted this change? Or would it be more correct to say that Christianity constituted itself the representative of the change? Those are difficult questions to answer: and the discussion they involve is too wide for our consideration here. But this we may surely say. The Greek world wrought its best to give us imperishable ideals of womanhood, which still exert a direct influence on the poetic imagination and the national sentiment of English literature to-day. The Roman world wrought I suppose its best also, and gave us the women of Rome's golden age, and their ideals exercise but little influence on the motive or mood of modern poetry. Christianity however, has not yet wrought her best, her ideal life is still ever mounting upward, and she has already enthroned in place and power a very pure and noble Ideal of womanhood.

### VI.

Let us turn then now to consider how in the history of the poetic ideas of our own land at any rate, that upward movement has progressed from level to level, to produce that ideal which I doubt not is enshrined in most of our hearts. It is of course impossible in the time at our disposal to do anything more than to place a cursory finger from point to point on that marvelously diversified chart which shows the progress of our English literature through the great epochs of our history. Let me however endeavour to give you illustrations of changing type from representative poets of at least four widely differing periods.

Come back with me to the middle of the eighth century.

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In the library of Exeter Cathedral there is an old book, or rather a roll of MSS., which I have myself seen, known by the name of the Exeter Book, containing probably the noblest product of early English genius. The book has lain in the Cathedral library ever since the day when it was placed there in the year 1071 by Leofric the first Bishop of Exeter, the Chancellor of England, the friend and counsellor of Edward the Confessor. In Leofric's catalogue of the books he placed in the library, the entry of this book written in choicest Anglo-Saxon reads thus: "A great English book on all sorts of subjects, wrought in verse." The first place in that book is held by that remarkable poem which is probably the oldest Christiad of modern Europe—Cynewulf's *Christ*. This is followed by the *Dream of the Holy Rood*, *Juliana*, *Elene*, *Andreas*, *Guthlac*, and the *Fates of the Apostles*. It is to this poet, and especially to his two poems, *Juliana* and *The Christ*, that I would make my first appeal.

Of Cynewulf himself we know very little. From the fact that the scenery of his poems closely resembles the coast scenery of Northumbria—the storm-lashed cliffs, the wintry tempestuous seas often weltering with ice—it is generally conjectured that he belonged to one or other of the towns of that region—Whitby, Jarrow, Lindisfarne, Tynemouth—all centres of learning in touch with the great Monastic School at York, and all places in which a poet would breathe that atmosphere of the sea which is so characteristic of the early poetry of our English forebears. Born about the year 715, twenty years or so before the death of the Venerable Bede,—in early life he seems to have been a wandering singer, passing from place to place, "moving at ease among rich and poor, as ready to verse a rude, even a coarse song, for the peasant and the soldier, as a lay of battle or of ancient wisdom for the Ætheling or the Abbot or the King, loving praise in the hall and fond of gifts, loving solitude also when the fit came on, and hiding himself from man, having a clear consciousness of his worth as a poet . . . indifferent to religion." Then there came a time when

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this careless life of the wandering minstrel or saga-singer passed away "like the hasting waves"—he says himself—"like the story which ends in silence." He is in bitterest sorrow, convinced of sin, fearful of the wrath of God, so full of remorse for the careless past that his song-craft leaves him. He is no more a poet. Then he wins hope again with a vision of the redeeming power of the love of Christ, and the craft of song returns. "God himself," he says, "unlocked the power of poetry in my heart." And the first thing that he wrote was the *Juliana*, to be followed by *The Christ*. Both poems are full of trumpet-tongued passages of joy and piety, pathetic wailing lyrics of passionate prayer and supplication, vivid dramatic pictures, rushing choric outbursts of praise and victory. And both are typical of that union of the old Pagan faith, and the new Christianity which was necessarily characteristic of our forefathers in the eighth century. Christ, for example, is undoubtedly a divine and imperial figure, supreme over heaven and earth, the Lord of glory and the everlasting son of the Father, the judge of the quick and dead, but yet conceived, somewhat saga-fashion as a victorious king, whose apostles and saints are thegns and æthelings, dispensing gifts of service among his thralls, waging a world-wide war in which earth and heaven and hell are mingled, and who, when the victory over the dark burg of hell shall be won, will sit down to feast with his warriors in the great hall of the light burg of heaven, amid the singing of the angels, who are the bards of the battle. The old Pagan faith in fact is Christianised, but the new Christian faith is also somewhat Paganised.

And this intermingling of ideal is seen also in this early English poet's conception of womanhood, as set forth in his *Juliana*.

In the days of Maximian, he says, there was a certain prince, a cruel persecutor of the Christians, whose heart began to love Juliana, daughter of Africanus, but she said 'nay' to him unless he became a Christian. But his heroine is a woman of the true northern type, generous and gentle and winning, but firm of char-

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acter, resolute of will, royal of bearing. The story is nothing. It follows the usual lines of the acts of innumerable female saints. But this quality of her character, resoluteness of purpose and will, carried almost to grimness, is the quality upon which Cynewulf builds all the action of his poem. "No torments," she cries, "will make me waver from these words of mine," so firm is the maiden soul of the strong-hearted heroine of the cross. Through one strife after another she passes, always firm as rock, always triumphant, and always fixed as fate. She is thrown into prison, and a quasi-epic character is given to the poem by the introduction of the supernatural. As she sits in her cell, the devil appears to her in angel shape and bids her sacrifice to the Gods. "Whence art thou?" she says. "I am," he replies, "an angel of God, and I bid thee save thyself." She answers by an impassioned prayer to God that He will keep her true, and reveal to her what kind of man this is, this "flier through the lift" who bids her fall away from God. And a voice answers out of the sky: "Grasp at the wicked one and hold him fast, until he tell thee all concerning his works." And the devil is forced to stay with the maiden and talk all the night long, to his great trouble and dismay. He is forced to obey, and speaks of many of the wrongs he has wrought among men, and hopes then to escape. But "say on," cries Juliana, with grim humour and perhaps endless curiosity: "say on, thou uncleanly spirit." And the fiend four times despairingly tries to escape, and four times he is forced back to confession by the woman. "It is a bitter business," he cries, amazed with the woman. And then he tries compliment, and at least his compliment adds to our conception of the strength of this amazon of the faith. "No man was ever so brave as thou, O holy maiden, to lay hands on me: not one on all the earth was ever so high spirited: not one of the Patriarchs or yet of the Prophets could crush me as thou hast done, nor bind in bonds my strength when I came from the dark to sweeten sin for thee. Misery has come of that and heavy battle. Never shall I dare after this bitter pun-

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ishment, to rejoice amid my comrades of this voyage, when I take back my wretched failure to my joyless dwelling." Then the dawn breaks and the devil is free. "There is not a woman in the world," he cries, "of greater spirit, nor among maids one mightier in anger than thou art." The last scene of her martyrdom immediately follows. She endures all, and every pain only enhances her beauty. At the moment of beheadal the fiend returns and sings a scornful song, but Juliana glances at him and he takes his flight. "Woe is me accursed, a second time she will disgrace me as before." Victorious, the Virgin Saint makes her last speech to the people, and all her softness and sweetness return. She is the winsome maiden, the tender loving girl, "the dearest" daughter of her father, his sweetest sunshine, the light of his eyes, "fulness of youth, thou hast, infinite gifts of grace and bloom of loveliness." And her death words are those of a noble woman: "Peace be with you and true love for ever."

Cynewulf's poem of *The Christ* is a poem which reaches still higher levels of heroic vision. It is not too much I think to say of it that "the lofty magic of Milton's mighty mouthed harmonies," and not less perhaps Milton's sombre Puritan faith and its somewhat lurid conceptions of the future of the unsaved, come down to him in legitimate descent from this earliest exaltation of English Psalm. But in the poem, as perhaps indeed throughout the history of the popular Christianity of early and mediæval England, the somewhat sombre and grim aspect of the semi-paganised Gospel, is brightened with the idyllic beauty of the figure of Our Lady, and through her, of that conception of womanhood, which, whatever may be the mistakes and heresies of a later Mariolatry, yet undoubtedly did so much to soften and refine the heroic ideals of our early forebears.

"For in reverence of the Heavene's Queene  
They came to worship allē women that bene."

"And be pleased to recollect good Protestant feminine hearers" (I am now quoting the words of Mr. Ruskin, your Master), "if you

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have in known history, material for recollection, this (or if you cannot recollect, be you very solemnly assured of this) that neither Madonna worship nor Lady worship of any sort, whether of dead ladies or living ones, ever did any human creature any harm—but that money worship, wig worship, cocked hat and feather worship, plate worship, pot worship, and pipe worship, have done and are doing a great deal—and that any of these and all are quite millionfold more offensive to the God of Heaven and Earth and the Stars than all the absurdest and loveliest mistakes made by any generation of his simple children about what the Virgin Mother could or would, or might do or feel for them."

More than half of the beginning of Cynewulf's *Christ* is dedicated to S. Mary's praise. The sweet and tender grace, the humility and loving kindness of the Virgin, her maidenhood, her motherhood, became for the men of mediæval England the most vivid and beautiful image that filled the minds of men after the image of Christ. Her entrance into the poem is managed with much dramatic effect. As she comes into view she is hailed, as by a chorus, and the sons and daughters of Jerusalem call to her to tell her tale—

"In the glorious glory Hail! gladness thou of women,  
Loveliest of maids in the lap of every land,  
That the ocean rovers ever listened speech of,  
Makes us know the mystery that hath moved to thee from Heaven."

And Mary "ever full of triumph" answers

"What is now this wonder at the which ye stare,  
Making here your moan, mournfully awaiting  
Son of Solima, daughter thou of Solima?"  
Ask ye no more: the mystery is not known,  
But the guilt of Eve is closed and the curse overcome.  
The lowlier sex is glorified and Hope is won,  
And men may dwell with the Father of Truth for ever."

I cannot enter further into the pictures of this poem—it would lead too far into that realm of Theology from which to-night at

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least I am debarred—but I have said enough I hope to show you how in this early English poetry, there are female figures of excelling beauty, clothed in a tender light, and yet of a character faithful, strenuous, firm, and how the relation of women to men, which played so large a part in English policy and war while England was yet heathen, received a fresh dignity from Christianity. You must follow up for yourselves in the pages of Bæda, and in legend after legend in his history of the northern church, in the story of S. Hilda and Aidan at Hartlepool, of S. Cuthbert and Ælfeda at Whitby, of the Archbishop Wilfrid and S. Audrey, in my own island city of Ely, amid the rushy fens, and in all the poetry which the emotion of the people collected round these great names, you will find ideals of noble womanhood, to be passed on to future generations of English men and English women, as an inspiration and a guide to noble life, and a proof also perhaps that the root of the matter was in us more than a thousand years ago.

## VI.

Once again let me ask you to travel with me five centuries further down the highway of time to that age of chivalry and romance and of feudal genius which is embodied for us in the great cycle of Arthurian Legends. In that vast cluster of tales, which, in the song and ballad of wandering minstrel and troubadour, gradually gathered round the person of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table we have symbolised the good work which was done for the world of the middle ages by the social institution of feudal chivalry. For all practical purposes we English people have that cycle in its best form, for the *Morte d'Arthur* of Sir Thomas Malory, compiled in the reign of Edward IV., is wrought into a mould of pure English hardly second to the English of the Bible. The closing books of it "may certainly rank, both in conception and form, with the best poetry of Europe: its quiet pathos and reserved strength may

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hold their own with the epics of any age." How great was the influence of that fine epic, not only in nourishing the imagination, but also in fashioning the manners of English gentlemen in relation to womanhood in the times of the Tudors, we may gain some hint from the terms in which Caxton, our great English printer, speaks of it in the preface to his first printed edition in the year 1488.

"I have set it down in print," he says, "to the intent that noble men may see and learn the noble acts of chivalry, the gentle and virtuous deeds that some knights used in those days, by which they came to honour, and how they that were vicious were punished and oft put to shame and rebuke: humbly beseeching all noble lords and ladies, with all other estates of what estate or degree they been of, that shall see and read in this said book and work, that they take the good and honest acts in their remembrance, and to follow the same. Wherein they shall find many joyous and pleasant histories of noble and renowned acts of humanity, gentleness and chivalry. For herein may be seen noble chivalry, courtesy, humanity, friendliness, hardiness, love, friendship, cowardice, murder, hate, virtue and sin. Do after the good and leave the evil."

Now the root idea of chivalry is the service of woman. The names of God and of his lady are ever united on the lips of a true knight, for the motto of chivalry in its best period was "Dieu et ma Dame." "Always to do ladies, damosels and gentlewomen service upon pain of death" is the essential clause of the knight's fourfold oath of courage, kindness, obedience, purity, which has been translated for us so beautifully by Lord Tennyson in the well known lines:

"I made them lay their hands in mine and swear  
To reverence the King, as if he were  
Their conscience, and their conscience as their King,  
To break the heathen and uphold the Christ,  
To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,

## SAINT GEORGE.

To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,  
To honour his own word as if his God's,  
To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,  
To love one maiden only, cleave to her,  
And worship her by years of noble deeds  
Until they won her: for indeed I know  
Of no more subtle master under heaven  
Than is the maiden passion for a maid,  
Not only to keep down the base in man  
But teach high thought and amiable words  
And courtliness and the desire of fame,  
And love of truth and all that makes a man."

But for illustration of the ideal woman herself of this period I am somewhat at a loss. The real woman of the *Morte d'Arthur*, indeed or of any other of the poems of the Arthurian cycle, the Queen's Gwenver and Margause and their ladies of the court—all save the lily maid of Astolat—for "Elaine the fair, Elaine the lovable," and "Enid, Yniol's daughter, Geraint's wife, Enid the Good," are I fear very modern renderings of Malory's heroines—seem hardly worthy of the worship they inspire in the hearts of their lovers and their lords.

I think we must go back a century or so for our ideal woman of the poets in mediæval England, to our first starting point, Dan Chaucer. And with his *Canterbury Tales* in my hand I am sorely tempted to take as my ideal woman the Madame Eglantine of the prologue, the lively Prioress, with her courtly French lisp, her soft little red mouth, and her brooch with its posey "Amor vincet omnia," if it were only for that one perfect line—"and all was conscience and tender heart."

But take this picture instead from the *Franklin's Tale*:

"In Armoric that clepèd is Britaine,  
There was a knight that loved and did his pain  
To serve a lady in his bestè wise:  
And many a labour and many a great emprise  
He for his lady wrought ere she were won,  
For she was one the fairest under sun,

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And eke thereto come of so high kindrèd  
That well unnethës durst this knight for dread  
Tell her his woe, his pain and his distress.  
But attē last she for his worthinesse  
And namely for his meek obeyisance  
Hath such a pity caught of his penance  
That privily she fell of his accord  
To take him for her husband and her lord,  
(As such lorship as men have over their wives)  
And for to lead the more in bliss their lives  
Of his free will he swore her as a knight  
That never in all his life by day nor night  
Ne should upon him take no mastery  
Agens her will, ne kythe her jalousie  
But her obey, and follow her will in all,  
As any lover to his lady shall :  
Save that the *name* of sovereignty,  
That would he have for shame of his degree.  
She thanketh him, and with full great humbleness  
She said, sir, sith of your gentleness  
Ye profer me to have so large a reign  
Ne woldē never God betwixt us twain  
As in my guilt, were either war or strife  
Sir I will be your humble truē wife,  
Have here my troth, till that mine hearti brest,  
Thus be they both in quiet and in rest,  
For o thing, sirrēs, sauffly dare I say ?  
That friendēs ever each other most obey  
If they will longe holden companye  
Love will not be constrained by mastery.  
When mastery cometh the god of love anon  
Beateth his wingēs, and farewell, he is gone.  
Love is a thing as any spirit free  
Women of kind, desiren liberty  
And nought to be constrained as a thrall.  
And so do men, if I sooth sayen shall."

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### VII.

I must hurry somewhat to a conclusion: and yet it is difficult with all the lyric glories of the Elizabethan age before one, the high-strung exaltation and keen lyric cry of Marlowe, the full-coloured romance and impassioned vision of Beaumont and Fletcher, the fine poetic fancy of Jonson, the sombre genius and gloom of Webster, the sunshiny pastorals and garrulous gossip of Herrick, the sententious gravity of Wyatt, the rare strength and sweetness of Raleigh, the keen reality and swing and force of Philip Sidney, the bird-like freshness and cadency of Campion, the marvellous fertility of invention and majestic diction of Spenser, the supreme genius of the myriad-minded Shakespeare, it is difficult not to linger, but the area of choice is too great. If I began to quote I could not cease, but I could not well end a lecture on the true place and dignity of womanhood in human life without reminding you of Mr. Ruskin's appreciation of the heroines of Shakespeare in his *Sesame and Lillies*.

### VIII.

With regard to the Poets of the Victorian Age you might suppose perhaps that I should be in the same difficulty as that in which I feel myself with regard to those of the Elizabethan. The area of choice again seems seems altogether too wide. And indeed Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Scott, Campbell, Byron, Moore, Shelley, Keats, Landor, Clough, Mrs. Browning, Rossetti, Patmore, Arnold, Morris, Longfellow, Whittier, Lowell, Tennyson, Browning, do indeed form a golden roll of illustrious names. And yet for myself at any rate, I have no difficulty in selecting from these many witnesses two passages in Praise of Woman, which stand out conspicuously and which in their several ways, I think, can hardly be surpassed in all literature. The first is Wordsworth's *She was a Phantom of Delight*. Let me read it to you.

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"She was a phantom of delight,  
When first she gleamed upon my sight;  
A lovely apparition, sent  
To be a moment's ornament:  
Her eyes are stars of twilight fair;  
Like twilight, too, her dusky hair;  
But all things else about her drawn  
From May-time, and the cheerful dawn:  
A dancing shape, an image gay,  
To haunt, to startle and waylay.

I saw her upon nearer view  
A spirit, yet a woman too!  
Her household motions light and free  
And steps of virgin liberty;  
A countenance in which did meet  
Sweet records, promises as sweet:  
A creature not too bright and good  
For human nature's daily food:  
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,  
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene  
The very pulse of the machine:  
A being breathing thoughtful breath  
A traveller between life and death:  
The reason firm, the temperate will,  
Endurance, foresight, strength and skill:  
A perfect woman, nobly planned  
To warn, to comfort, and command;  
And yet a spirit still, and bright  
With something of an angel light."

And my second quotation is from Robert Browning. It is the poet's wonderful tribute to his dead wife, herself too a poet, in what he calls "the posy" to the Ring with which he would encircle her finger in the beautiful dedication of his greatest poem, *The Ring and the Book*.

"A ring without a posy and that ring mine?  
O lyric love, half angel and half bird  
And all a wonder and a wild desire,—

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Boldest of hearts that ever braved the sun,  
Took sanctuary within the holier blue,  
And sang a kindred soul out to his face,—  
Yet human at the red-ripe of the heart—  
When the first summons from the darkling earth  
Reached thee amid thy chambers, blanched their blue,  
And bared them of the glory—to drop down,  
To toil for man, to suffer or to die,—  
This is the same voice: can thy soul know change?  
Hail then and hearken from the realms of help!  
Never may I commence my song, my due  
To God Who best taught song by gift of thee,  
Except with bent head and beseeching hand—  
That still despite the distance and the dark,  
What was, again may be: some interchange  
Of grace, some splendour once thy very thought,  
Some benediction anciently thy smile:  
Never conclude, but raising hand and head  
Thither where eyes that cannot reach, yet yearn  
For all hope, all sustainment, all reward  
Their utmost up and on—so blessing back  
In those thy realms of help, that heaven thy home,  
Some whiteness which, I judge, thy face makes proud  
Some wanness where, I think, thy foot may fall.”

And now I have done. For you will hardly, the cruellest woman of you all, the scornfullest man, ask me to prophesy of the woman of the future. How could I do that? Where should I go for even the promise of the new ideal which the new century may yet perhaps give us. And yet—for I have a thought—is it possible that the new type may be after all only a reversion to an old ideal and a stranger land? A few weeks ago I spent a summer's afternoon in that noble college for women in one of our ancient universities, which all but realises Lord Tennyson's vision:

“A court,  
Compact of lucid marbles, bossed with lengths  
Of classic frieze, with ample awnings gay  
Betwixt the pillars, and with great urns of flowers,  
The muses and the graces. . . .

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Two great statues,  
Art and Science, Caryatids, lifted up  
A weight of emblem."

I passed into the halls—my guide the Lady Psyche or another, assuredly not the Lady Blanche—into the walks and gardens, into the common room, the lecture theatre, the chemical laboratory, the bicycle shed—at last the library. And there the Lady Psyche brought me to her holiest shrine, a case of ancient books on science and mathematics. One strange title caught my eye. It was the *Brahmagupta of Bhaskara*, a translation from a Sanskrit poet, made in 1817 by Colebrooke, one of our earliest Eastern Scholars. I found it a rhythmical treatise on Arithmetic and Algebra. The chapter on Multinomial Expressions began with an invocation.

"Salutation to Ganessa! Resplendent as blue and spotless Lotus, and delighting in the tremulous motion of the dark serpent, which is perpetually twining within thy breast."

I turned in astonishment to the Chapter on the Highest Common Factor. It was in the form of a Catechism of the student by (I hardly fancy) the lady lecturer, cast in heroic metre.

"Beautiful and dear Lilāvâtī!" it began, "whose eyes are like a fawn's, whose gentle grace is that of the young elephant! tell me what are the numbers resulting from 135 taken into 12? If thou be skilled in multiplication by whole or parts, whether by subdivision of form or separation of digits, tell me, O thou auspicious woman, what is the quotient of the product divided by the same multiplier?"

Ladies and gentlemen, comrades and sisters of the Society of the Rose, you prefer with me do you not, the mysticism of Browning's *Women and Roses*, to the mysticism of Bhaskara's girl graduates and poetic algebra?

I.

"I dream of a red rose tree  
And which of its roses three  
Is the dearest rose to me?"

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II.

"Round and round, like a dance of snow  
In a dazzling drift, as its guardians, go  
Floating the women faded for ages,  
Sculptured in stone, on the poets pages.  
Then follow women fresh and gay,  
Living and loving and loved to-day,  
Last in the rear, flee the multitude of maidens,  
Beauties unborn. And all, to one cadence,  
They circle their rose on my rose tree.  
\* \* \*

Wings, lend wings for the cold, the clear  
What is far conquers what is near.  
Roses will bloom nor want beholders,  
Sprung from the dust where our flesh moulders.  
What shall arrive with the cycle's change?  
A novel grace and a beauty strange?  
I will make an Eve, by the artist that began her,  
Shaped her to his mind!—Alas! in like manner  
They circle their rose on my rose tree."

## THE STATE AS A PARENT.\*

By Mrs. S. A. Barnett.

**T**O an audience summoned by a Ruskin Society, I cannot do better than begin with some words of that great master: "You know how often it is difficult to be wisely charitable and to do good without multiplying the sources of evil. You know that to give alms is nothing unless you give thought also and that therefore it is written not: "Blessed is he that feedeth the poor" but "Blessed is he that *considereth* the poor."

This, then, is our duty this evening, to "consider the poor"—and not only the poor generally, and in the abstract, but the children of the poor. Perhaps it is hardly possible to choose a more interesting and pregnant subject, and you will pardon me if I deal with it in some detail, for it is a matter on which people should not feel vaguely and think lightly, but about which they should know facts, and strive for the ideal.

There are in England and Wales 238,489 children dependant on the State, and of these nearly 60,000 are wholly supported, that is, fed, clothed, housed, knowing no other home than that supplied by the Nation's money and the Nation's thought.

For these the State is the sole parent and it fulfils its parental obligation in seven different ways. By rearing the children

1. In Barrack Schools.
2. In Village Communities.
3. In Scattered Groups.
4. In Certified Homes.
5. In Workman's Cottages.
6. In the Colonies.
7. In the Workhouses.

\* Abstract of a lecture delivered before the Ruskin Society of Birmingham, November 11th, 1897.

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Of *Barrack Schools* much has been said, and as the only woman member of the Departmental Committee whose duty it was to enquire into the systems under which metropolitan poor law children are reared, it will be better perhaps for me to confine my remarks on Barrack Schools to those used for London children. There are twenty-one of these, the largest being certified for over 1,500 children, the smallest for one hundred. In the twenty-one Schools over 13,000 are housed, and though the administration varies in each, the faults inherent in the system are found in all, and it was the *system* which was unanimously and unqualifyingly condemned by the Committee.

This condemnation has greatly angered many of the guardians and officials, and yet, to everyone who loves a little child, who understands its changeful nature, rich in faith, ready to love, quick to respond, restless in activity; it will be plain that a system which governs by rules, keeps order by discipline and trains by mechanism, must fail to develop what is best in human nature, and is, alas! so often dormant in the children of the pauper and the degraded.

In these Barrack Schools, every duty, however small or personal, must be done in the strictest order. Peeling potatoes, blacking boots, making beds, are in the workman's cottage or the small Charity home, means of education and actions containing some interest, but in vast institutions they must be performed by rule.

Mrs. Barnett then read an account, given by the Superintendent, of the method by which the Boys' personal washing is conducted in the Sutton Schools, which, unnatural as it was, was necessary to avoid the evils of ophthalmia, and yet the schools had been riddled by that disease, four hundred and sixty-two children having been affected in one epidemic, eleven children having lost an eye each in another. In Dr. Stephenson's recent enquiries he found within the London Barrack Schools 5·72 children had active trachoma, while only 0·46 are so troubled among children living at home.

Out of the 5·72 per cent. and in direct consequence of

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trachoma Dr. Stephenson found four hundred and seventy-nine damaged eyes. The sight of seventy-one had not been affected, but in seventy-nine eyes the sight is reduced to one-third of the normal, in sixty-six to one-half, forty-eight eyes can only see one-third as well as they should, thirty-five one-fourth, thirty-seven one-sixth, and forty-nine one-tenth, and to this we must add that "in consequence of trachoma twenty-two eyes are blind, using that expression in a popular as opposed to a scientific sense," namely, they are unable to distinguish fingers or see light. "This is a formidable catalogue" writes the ophthalmic expert, "and it must be borne in mind that it is due to a malady that is preventible and ought to be prevented."

It sometimes seems to me that we should count it cause for gratitude when physical evils declare themselves in evidence of a mistaken policy, and for this reason, perhaps opthalmia should be welcomed as a warning of our error in rearing children in institutions, not homes; for the real evil of the system lies not so much in the opthalmia, the ringworm, the stunted growth and signs of malnutrition, which are so common in children brought up in large numbers, as in the mental and moral characteristics the system seems to produce. The children are often dull, sullen, mechanical, unfitted by experience to grapple with difficulties, without the memories which make friendships, and deficient in the resource which has been born of choice, conquest of difficulties and the pursuit of personal tastes. Love with its responsive effort, the keynote of all true moral training is perforce generally absent. The girls specially suffer often showing intense obstinacy and sullenness, and a want of interest in anything, extending even to carelessness as to their own fate or condition, while the moral contamination which frequently exists among these children must be by all deeply deplored. The absence of healthy interest leaves minds in which evil readily finds a home. At the same time the constant flow in and out of children with knowledge of sin gained in the lowest haunts of our large towns,

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offers the more permanent children an opportunity of excitement at once attractive and demoralising.

My knowledge of pauper girls is not gained by hearsay, for nineteen years I was manager appointed by the Local Government Board of one of the large Barrack Schools, and for fourteen years I had never less than three of these girls in our little cottage at Hampstead where, under the superintendence of my old nurse they tried their 'prentice hands at domestic work on my sister, Canon Barnett and myself. It was because I had seen the impossibility of the girls, learning domestic ways in institutions where the cooking was done by steam or gas, the washing by machinery, the mending in squads, that we began this little home, and as I learned to know and to deeply care for each of the one hundred and thirty-five, who 'one by one' passed into our lives; as I watched and guided them when they were launched on to the wider world, I realized with the force that comes only of experience, that a system which sends out girls of fourteen ignorant of the common affairs of life, without resource in difficulty, deficient in self-respect, often indifferent to their own characters and unconscious of the glorious privileges of loving and being loved, *must* be a wrong system.

Mrs. Barnett then said that her work on the Government Committee had greatly deepened this conviction, and she read a passage from the Departmental Report stating that the evils of wholesale legislation and training in the Barrack Schools are not such as can be there remedied, but are inherent in the system "where children must be treated as parts of a huge machine."

### *Village Communities.*

These are institutions not of one block building but consisting of various smaller houses (mis-named cottages, as they generally contain 26 to 40 inmates) within an enclosure. The girls live in one part of the colony, the boys in another. Each house for girls is under the care of a Matron, those for the boys being governed by a married couple. The domestic work is done by

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the Matrons, the girls helping under their supervision, and the boys aid in the workshop. The children go daily to a specially provided school and return to their various homes for food, work, play and all purposes of their non-scholastic life.

The advantages of the Village Community System are many and great.

1. The evils of aggregation are largely absent.
2. Health is better and physical development greater than in Barrack School life.
3. The domestic interests and the care and attention a competent house mother is able to give to the children's diet, clothing, and individual requirements, result in a more wholesome development of character and intelligence.

But the system has its limitations:

1. It does not provide a real home.
2. The inmates are separated from the general population. The village is an artificial community, and is, by the circumstances of the case, far removed from other dwellings. The result of such isolation is, that the children cannot see life under ordinary conditions or learn the lessons of every-day experience.
3. The inhabitants are too much of one age, and the sexes are entirely separate. These facts give a wholly exceptional character to the "village community," and minimise its use as an educational agency.
4. Valuable as is the influence of the "Cottage Mother" while the child is under her care, that influence ceases when it quits the school, for the cottage is not a home to which it may return in after life.
5. The children cannot make friends outside the community.
6. The seclusion of the officers tends to narrow their interests and weaken their energies.
7. To build a village for paupers, both emphasizes their pauperism and provides for it in too luxurious a manner.

Although I should be among the last to deprive a pauper child

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of any environment which should encourage it to take a worthier stand in life, I cannot hide from myself the fact that it is inexpedient to make pauperism attractive, or to flout before the eyes of the struggling widow that the circumstances of the pauper child are more advantageous than those of her own bairn.

For this reason it would be well to scatter these children and to endeavour to arrange that their physical conditions should be approximate to those of the labouring, industrial population.

I may say in passing, that I was much struck with the management of the two village communities belonging to Birmingham, when I visited them two years ago, and one of my regrets is (that your pauper colonies *being built*) the initiative capacity and the executive ability exhibited in their making and management, is not at liberty to take still further steps on the road of progress, and show the world a yet more excellent way of rearing nobody's child. Surely among the cruelties of modern civilization is that which compels an individual or community to wear shoes their growth has made too small. I can imagine the progressive spirits of Birmingham regretting the £65,000 sunk in what their fathers thought the most excellent system, because economic conditions and social ideals have expanded, and practical Christianity has shown that the leper must be touched to be healed.

As child lovers *consider* the poor, it may be borne in upon them that there is yet another way of nurturing these orphans. It may be helpful to think not of them in hundreds and thousands but but picture our own treasured child with no parent but the State. A home, we shall all agree, is what we should wish to obtain for our own child, why should we not open our homes to one of these children?

In many places where the servants are trusted and the household is regular, it might be easily done. The child could go to the Board School, make its companions in its own class, and find food for its affections and interests in the welfare of the inmates of both parlour and kitchen.

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In the few cases of which I know where single ladies and childless couples have taken these children into their households, the kitchen inmates have gained therefrom in interest, responsibility, and that nameless quality which follows on the knowledge that they too are helping to bear the sorrows of this difficult world, while the slight additional expense and small worries which attend every extra member of a household is abundantly repaid by the whiff of the atmosphere of joy which seems ever to accompany a little child.

The idea of finding place for a homeless child in somebody's home is no new one, but hitherto the effort has been confined to the homes of the poorer class of the working people.

I would suggest that people of gentle birth and cultivation should take these children, though, as I do so, I know that the suggestion will be considered Utopian, and I be classed among the impracticable people. But this I can stand, for harder terms than those were used when, twenty-two years ago, we told the Oxford graduate that it was his duty to use his brain to solve the problems of the poor, and his young strength in their service. The Settlement movement was the answer. So experience giveth hope, and "hope maketh me not ashamed," as I gently suggest to you "to home" in your homes some homeless child.

### *Boarding out.*

The advantages of this system as it is now carried on when children are placed, with the payment of a small weekly sum, under the care of working class people, are so obvious that I feel almost apologetic for mentioning them, but briefly to sum up.

1. The child lives in a natural home.
2. Its standard of health is higher.
3. Individual character is considered.
4. The child makes friendships with the ladies who visit it, friendships which often continue long after it has ceased to be chargeable.

So much for the Child's side.

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On the Villagers' side :

5. The foster parent is often glad of the weekly payment and the child's company.

6. The boarded out child brings and keeps the villager in closer touch with persons of culture and refinement.

7. It enables the poor to be charitable.

8. Money is brought into the village shops and interest into the villager's lives.

On the Ratepayers' side :

9. Boarding out is cheaper than the other methods of provision, each child when boarded outcosting £ 13, against £ 29 5s. 9d. when in the Barrack Schools.

10. No buildings are required and therefore as child pauperism increases and decreases the capital charge remains the same.

On the other hand it is said that there are not enough persons of respectability who are willing and able to be foster parents to these children. To this it may be replied that Dr. Barnardo and the Waifs and Strays Society find abundance of homes, and that in Scotland eighty-four per cent. of the State supported children are boarded out. In Switzerland seventy-two per cent., in Russia ninety-three per cent., while in Germany the system is compulsory. "I am loth to believe" continued the lecturer "that our English peasantry are less to be trusted than those of other nations."

### *The Scattered Homes.*

Under this system, as initiated and worked by the Sheffield citizens, the children never enter the workhouse. On becoming paupers, they are received into an institution, specially built for that purpose, but beyond this no other building is erected. After a period of probation the children are sent to one of the Homes. These are ordinary dwelling houses hired yearly or on short leases in ordinary streets in industrial districts of the town. Each house contains fifteen children, boys up to ten years old, girls and infants being reared together.

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The children are under the care of a House-mother who, with the assistance of two elder girls and occasional responsible help, does all the domestic labour required for the family of fifteen. The children attend the Board School, Local Church, Sunday School, Band of Hope, play in the parks or streets, and if ill, are attended by the Local Doctor.

The advantages of the Scattered Home System are :

1. The children live in a household which as nearly as possible approximates to a natural family.
2. They mix with the normal child population.
3. They see life as it is and learn to distinguish between right and wrong.
4. The presence of boys and girls and infants in the same house awakens wholesome affections and prevents the dangers which follow sex ignorance.

The disadvantages are :

1. The children in later life cannot return to the home.
2. The "Ins and Outs" are a source of both physical and moral danger.

These "Ins and Outs" are one of the most difficult problems in poor-law administration.

They may be divided into the two classes :

1. Those who come *in* because of some legitimate family accident or misfortune, and who go *out* when things are better and Hope appears on the horizon.
2. Those who are the children of the vagrant, the drunken, the dissolute, who come *in* when vicious courses have emptied the family exchequer, and go *out* when their parents feel that the control of the able-bodied workhouse has become intolerable to their lawless natures.

Mrs. Barnett preceeded to speak of the sad increase in the latter class and quoted from a report of the master of the Marylebone Workhouse to the effect that one family of three children had been in and out of the workhouse sixty-two times in thirteen

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months, another couple with four children forty-three times in the same period. Another workhouse master reported that one woman, by always removing her child on the day previous to the one on which she would have been transferred to the schools (to return on the day following), had kept that child exposed to the contamination of workhouse association for over two years.

In consequence of these things, the State Children's Aid Association had drafted a Bill to gain, for those Boards of Guardians who would use it, greater power of control over those neglected children.

Alluding to the large number of children who pass in and out of the workhouses in consequence of trade disaster, or illness or misfortune of their parents, Mrs. Barnett pleaded for more careful consideration of each application for relief. This she said had been done with excellent result by the Whitechapel Union, where with a population of 74,000 there were only seventy-five children, other than those boarded out, trained on the ship, or in small certified homes, to be provided for.

### *Children in the Colonies.*

Canada wants children. Mr. Samuel Smith, M.P., says: "A great many Canadian farmers have no children in their own homes; they marry early; the children grow up; they settle in life very early; they go away from home. You very often find a couple living alone and they are glad to have children for company. Generally speaking we have four times as many applications as we can supply. If we have sixty children we shall have two hundred or three hundred applications for them."

In recognition of this fact, the Boards of Guardians have been given large powers for the emigration of children. Yet very few pauper children are sent to the Colonies. Why? Expense is not the difficulty, a child can be emigrated for £11 19s. 4d., whereas the average cost in a London Barrack School is nearly £30 a year. The true reason—and no blame-worthy one—for the backwardness of the Guardians in the matter, is the bad

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Government arrangement. In opposition to the methods of the Emigration Societies, the Local Government Board

1. Brands the children as paupers.
2. Makes no demand that they shall be educated.
3. Asks for no wages for them.
4. Requires only one report of a child after it leaves England.

So, though Canada wants our children and they need the broad acres and kindly hearts awaiting them there, yet without adequate inspection and without a Canadian Refuge, it were *not* wise to send our pauper children in large numbers to the Colonies. But these conditions can be changed, and the State Children's Aid Association works and hopes to get them changed.

### *Children in the Workhouses.*

In London, alone, there are 3,000 of these, 2,000 being over school age.


Mixing as a rule with the adult paupers and from them often absorbing low ideals and unseemly habits, these children live for months together without lessons, playthings or interests, rarely going beyond the gates, without employment and deprived of joy.

This state of things is on all sides condemned, even by the Guardians themselves, and if you ask me why it continues to exist said I reply, because the public has not yet cared and because most of us—who deeply, passionately, love our own children—are not yet worthy to claim the blessing offered to him who “*considereth*” the children of the poor.

It is always easier to remember principles than facts. So in conclusion I would lay down a simple principle, which is that *a home is the best place for a child*, and systems are good or bad, not according to their administration, but in proportion as they approximate to the ideal of a home. And of a true home, we shall all agree, the keynote must be love, the result—strong individualities modified by a sense of duty.

## THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE UNIVERSE.\*

By the Rev. R. C. Fillingham (Rector of Hexton).

UR first ideas of the universe are generally distorted ones. So it was in the infancy of the race, so it is in the infancy of the individual. When primitive man looked out first upon the world, he spiritualized it, indeed, but in a crude and materialistic way. He peopled it with the weird beings of his own nascent imagination. In the roar of the tempest and the howl of the wind he heard the voice of an angry God: when he came to the stream, he feared to cross it, lest he should violate the will of a deity who had put it there to divide land from land: when he saw the eclipse, he believed that a deity in wrath was withdrawing light from the world, and when the sun sank at night, he feared that it might not rise on the morrow: and as the darkness came on, he crawled trembling in his cave in the forest, and pictured the stealthy tread, the awful presence of spiritual beings in the pathless woods. This was a conception of the universe wiser and fuller than that of the materialist, erroneous and simple though it was: it was the childhood of the race getting a dim inkling of the truths we were to learn in later years: even as Wordsworth pictures the child now coming into the world with a spiritual perception which is afterwards blunted in the case of most men:—

“Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God, who is our home:  
Heaven is about us in our infancy!  
Shades of the prison-house begin to close  
Upon the growing boy,  
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows  
He sees it in his joy:

\* A Lecture delivered before the Ruskin Society of Birmingham, November 24th, 1897.

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The youth, who daily further from the east  
Must travel, still is nature's priest,  
And by the vision splendid  
Is on his way attended ;  
At last the man perceives it die away,  
And fade into the light of common day."

So the intimations of the spirituality of the universe lingered all about the early world. The mythology of the Greeks and Romans was a spiritualizing of natural objects and influences. Every grove and every fountain had its nymph : every river was a God : the sun was a spiritual being, and when Medea had sacrificed her children in her wrath, he sent down his chariot to rescue her from the clutches of her enemies. There were the Gods of the Groves, the Gods of the Rivers, the Gods of the Seas : all the universe was alive with spiritual beings. Such a conception certainly promoted the feeling of reverence and awe for external beauty, and is a premonition of the truth to be revealed to later generations : still, it is a materialistic view, as it assigns a definite concrete being to every manifestation of Nature. The Hebrew view of the world is dissimilar, but is still further from the truth. The Jew did not see God *in* Nature : he regarded the form of the universe as so many material instruments in the hands of God, to teach, to punish, or to bless. He "bloweth with His wind, and the waters flow : " He "giveth snow like wool, and scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes : " "the voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars, yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon." In all this, God is not regarded as immanent in Nature, but as apart from Nature, yet even in this crude conception, there *is* a premonition of the truth, inasmuch as the Jew believed that Nature teaches. St. Paul regarded Nature as a revelation of God in this sense : "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen," he says, "being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and glory." You see at once the truth and error of this conception, which was that alike of the Jews and the Christian Church : certainly, Nature has a teaching voice,

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but Nature is mechanical, and the things we see are "the things that are made."

As the world got further away from its infancy, as the morning of romance died away, and the hot noon of strenuous endeavour came on, the thought of man tended more and more in a material direction. The theologians were largely responsible for this. The Church had always gone upon assumptions, and asked men to receive transcendental statements without proof, and upon her own authority. The reformation did not remedy this confusion of thought: it substituted merely one set of assumptions for another, and instead of claiming blind submission from the infallible Church, it claimed it for the infallible Book. As Rome burned Cranmer for denying the doctrines of the Church, so Geneva burned Servetus for doctrines which it affirmed to be inherent in the Bible. And when the ruder weapons of a ruder age were taken from the hands of the theologians, the process of intolerance still went on in mitigated forms: and we know how almost within the memory of the present generation, certain lewd fellows of the baser sort among the theologians deprived the Regius Professor of Greek, at Oxford, of his salary because he could not utter their shibboleths. All this insistence on the unprovable—for after all, the only true definition of a dogma is "a proposition which can neither be proved nor disproved"—drove thoughtful men into the opposite direction: they would have nothing but what could be proved: and for a while materialism became the dominant school of thought. It was the reaction against an illogical transcendentalism. The discoveries of science gave an impetus to the movement, and it came to be taken for granted among the majority of thinkers that we are part and parcel of a mechanical universe: that in the course of the ages, of infinite aeons, matter, in its ever-changing transformations, produced, at last, life, intelligence, feeling, emotion. Modern science still holds tenaciously to this view. Our system, it is held, was once a floating mass of fiery vapour; when the heat declined, the atoms rushed together and formed the sun: the

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sun, as it rotated, threw off particles which became new worlds: in the process of millions of years, as the cooling process went on, the sea overspread the earth: the volcanic islands were thrown up, and in due time land and water began to take each its place. But still, in awful solitude, a lifeless world rushed on, in infinite procession, through the vastness of a trackless sky. The eternal series of the ages went on: then in the water, embryonic forms of animals were found, cells developed, and limbs from the cells; and so, in due time, by change after change (the law of change always acting in the direction of complexity) came man. Shakespeare, Goethe, Milton, Christ, all that they have done, all that they have thought, all that they have taught, come by a mechanical process from primal matter. Such, in the briefest outline, is the materialistic hypothesis: man and the universe are alike material.

A similar view of the world, though not stated in the same dogmatic language, is taken by the superficial observer. He, too, regards the external world as consisting of dead matter, though he regards himself probably, if he ever thinks of ultimate problems at all, as a kind of *lusus naturae*: not part of Nature, but unconnected with Nature. He would take the view of the mighty Philistine of the 18th century, Dr. Johnson, who, when confronted with the Berkeleyan hypothesis, though he refuted it by striking mightily a stone with his foot. So, if to the immeasurably lesser Philistine of the 19th century you suggested a doubt of the separate and material existence of what we call *things*, he would strike a table, or ask you triumphantly if the existence of trees and skies is not proved by the fact that we see them. (And even that so-called "fact," we may remark in passing, is not a fact at all: we do *not* "see" trees and skies, but only a small photograph reflected on the retina). To him the world was made for man, as a carpenter makes a table or chair. And therefore it is that he is devoid of the sense of mystery, that sense which is one of the highest delights of life: he holds a cut-and-dried theory which completely

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satisfies him, and he passes through the world unobservant and unmoved. Wordsworth, who knew so well the recesses of the human heart, has, in *Peter Bell*, described for ever such an individual :

"A primrose by the river's brim  
A yellow primrose was to him,  
And it was nothing more."

Now, a few moments' examination will show us that whatever view is tenable, the materialistic view of the universe is absolutely unthinkable, absolutely unreasonable, whether from the theoretic point of view, or whether from the point of view of pure scepticism.

Take one initial difficulty, from the first point of view—the existence of space. If matter was created in space, space existed before matter : but how did space come into existence? You cannot reply that space was created, for space is not an entity : to assert it, is to say that at one time space was non-existent : but this, though it may be said, is really absolutely unthinkable : for space, like time, is an essential condition of thought. To state, then, that space was created at any time is to state an absolute contradiction, to say you can think the unthinkable : yet to say that space is self-existent is to deny the idea of a Creator at all.

And further, to affirm the absolute existence of matter as independent of Spirit, is to be involved in an insuperable contradiction as regards the nature of the Great First Cause. We are bound to think of the First Cause as absolute, or independent, for were the first cause dependent on any other Form of Being, he would cease to be the First Cause. But a cause exists only in relation to an effect : here we have, as Mansel pointed out, the idea of relation brought into our conception, and that idea is, of course, inconsistent with the idea of the absolute. And further, if this first cause existed once without displaying creative energy, and then created, He became what He once was not—*i.e.*, causation was to Him a possible mode of existence. He passed certain limits and

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became a Cause, which He was not before—therefore, He once was not infinite. I am aware that this does not prove anything positively: but it shows that the idea of material existences apart from Spirit involves a contradiction and absurdity.

But, further, setting aside for the moment the idea of a First Cause, from the purely agnostic point of view, we shall find that the assertion of the independent existence of matter involves us in equal absurdity. This is shown in the clearest manner by Schopenhauer in the first book of his great work, *The World as Will and Idea*. He traces the steps by which the materialist assumes the ultimate evolution of knowledge from primary matter, and then says: "If we had followed materialism thus far with clear ideas, when we reached its highest point, we would suddenly be seized with a fit of the inextinguishable laughter of the Olympians. As if waking from a dream, we would all at once become aware that its final result, knowledge, which it reached so laboriously, was presupposed as the indispensable condition of its very starting point, mere matter: and when we imagined that we thought matter, we really thought only the subject that perceives matter: the eye that sees it, the hand that feels it, the understanding that knows it . . . The fundamental absurdity of materialism is that it starts from the objective . . . whereas in truth the objective is already determined as such in manifold ways by the knowing subject through its forms of knowing, and presupposes them: and consequently it entirely disappears if we think the subject away."

Now, this puts before us a point of view which no reasonable man can deny, on reflection, whatever his preconceptions may be. He may be far from being an Idealist in philosophy, but this much he is certainly bound to admit—that Subject and Object are relative terms, and to talk of the one as existent apart from the other is to utter mere contradictions. The material object cannot have any being apart from the thinking subject: yet, it is also true, as we shall know further on, that the subject cannot be without

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the shadow of itself, the object. Wherefore, when the materialist talks of the evolution of life and intelligence from dead matter, and supposes matter to be a distinct existence by itself, we reply to him: "Your assertion is a mere contradiction in terms. To speak of sun and moon and earth as existent before the Ego perceived them is to attempt to sever two terms indissolubly connected in thought: the object *could* not exist apart from the subject, or else language is devoid of meaning."

Let us state the proposition in still plainer language. If you claim for matter an independent existence, either before, or apart from, the existence of Spirit, you are putting it outside the mental category. What does this imply? Surely this—you are asserting that you can conceive of matter as existing apart from consciousness: that is, *you can think of it as existing unthought*. Was there ever a more flagrant contradiction? It is as good as saying that a sound can exist unheard. People actually say sometimes, when this truth is first brought before them, "would not this sun and sky still be in existence if I were not there to see them? Have they not, therefore, an existence independent of *me*?" We reply: "They would, indeed, exist, this sun and sky of which you speak, if *any* other thinking mind perceived them—but if not? To say you can think of them as existing apart from *any* mind is simply to say that you can conceive of their existing unconceived. You are then, talking of the impossible: you *cannot*, do what you will, think of a thing as existing outside consciousness, simply because you cannot *get* outside consciousness: any more than you can escape from your shadow. Wherefore, to exist only means to be perceived, and then, by another train of reasoning, we see that the materialistic and mechanical conception of the universe is a mere contradiction and absurdity."

Now, no thinking man will seriously dispute the reasoning you have so far followed. And yet, I know, it will have produced a kind of unsatisfactory impression on your minds: you will have a latent feeling: "This is all very well, but after all we feel, in

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our inmost hearts, that the world is not a chimera, is not a dream. There is a reality about it. The glories we have seen, the glories that have filled our souls with ecstasies: the gradual coming of the dawn upon the waters, the tremulous anticipations of the advancing day: the solemn procession of the sun across the sky: the red on the sea and the red on the mountains, when, defeated in his day-long contest with the night, he left the crimson marks of his death-wounds before he died: the wonderful change of the seasons—the deadness of winter, the soft breath of spring, the flowering heyday of summer, the wan, mellow light of autumn, when the hectic flush of the year's consumption was marked in strange colours in copse and coppice: these things which have fed our spirits, have exalted us, have given us glimpses of eternity—these things are *not* unreal: they are no delusion, no pathetic fallacy: they exist, as truly as we do."

Yes, you are right: this spectacle of natural beauty, O, it is not unreal. It is true as righteousness, true as duty, true as God. I would as soon question its reality as I would question my own existence, my own aspiration after infinite things. All I say is, it is not mechanical, it is not mere matter: all the beauty we see around us is *real because it is spiritual*.

For there is a reconciliation of all apparent contradictions. We have insisted that the Object has no reality apart from the Subject: but it is equally true that the Subject must have its co-relative Object, or it could not exist. But this Object cannot be something entirely apart from the nature of the Subject, or else there would be a quite irreconcilable opposition: we should have two orders of phenomena, for the union of which there would be no common term. We need scarcely stop to discuss the objection, that it would be as easy to describe the spiritual in terms of the material as to describe the material in terms of the spiritual, as we have already seen that an independent material existence is inconceivable, and moreover, as the one thing given us in consciousness is that we are spiritual beings. We are compelled,

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therefore, to recognize the Object to condition the Subject, but we are equally compelled to read the spiritual nature of the Subject into the Object.

And this brings us to our point: that the spirituality of the universe is no enthusiastic or ungrounded assumption, but is demanded from the strictly philosophical point of view. In all that follows, we shall not be merely giving expression to the dictates of a poetic sentimentality: we shall have, let us remember, as the basis of our feelings and belief, a serious philosophic argument to rely on. The spirituality of the universe is, indeed, an intuition and a revelation: but it is also a fact founded on the irrationality of any theory which contradicts it.

Ultimate truths are often revealed in the first place to poets, before they find general acceptance. The poet is pre-eminently the *seer*—the man who has keener vision than others, who perceives intuitively things which have not yet been revealed to humanity. He is the *seer*, too, because he penetrates to the heart and experience of humanity, and puts into language the thought or feeling which hung tremulously on the ordinary man's life, but which he could not himself express. That is why so many lines of poetry become current coin: we recognise in them the universal note. It is by this striking of the universal note that a poet attains the first or at least the second rank. Thus, though Swinburne has written much that is magnificent and entrancing: though there are probably no finer lyrics in the English language than the choruses in *Atalanta*: though every enchantment of art and skill is to be found in such lines as these:

“When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces,  
The mother of months, in meadow and plain,  
Fills the shadows and empty places  
With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain.”

yet because the great bulk of his work is “sound and fury, signifying nothing,” *e.g.*, has no deep thought and no universal note behind it, it will not rank so high nor hold so permanent and

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deep a place in our affections as the sad and gentle Recluse of Olney and Weston, who voices our feelings in such delicate and simple lines as these :

" There is in souls a sympathy with sounds,  
And as the mind is pitched the ear is pleased  
With melting airs or martial, brisk or grave.  
Some chord in unison with what we hear  
Is touched within us, and the heart replies."

Now, Wordsworth was pre-eminently the *seer*, in the highest sense of the word. Falling upon late and prosaic days, falling upon a material age, he voiced those subtle instincts of early man to which I referred at the outset of my remarks, and he brought to this worn and tired generation the old sense of the mystery of things, and made it feel that the world is not dead but alive. The *Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey*, containing some of the most stately verse in our language, contains also the whole philosophy of the spirituality of Nature.

" I have learned  
To look on Nature, not as in the hour  
Of thoughtless youth : but hearing oftentimes,  
The still, sad music of humanity,  
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power  
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt  
A Presence that disturbs me with the joy  
Of elevated thoughts : a sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean, and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man :  
A motion and a spirit, that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
And rolls through all things."

My friends, this " Presence," this is what we have felt, if we have a soul that is reverent for Nature. We have felt it, as we stood at night, and watched the track of silver moonlight across the

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bosom of the sea: we have felt it as we watched the vast conflagration of the western sky: we have felt it as we took our way through the wildwood, and courted the moss and fern in its inmost recess: nay, it has come upon us in the heart of cities, as suddenly, in the dingiest place, perhaps trailing on the wall of some grim factory where men labour for not *their* bread, we have seen the red creeper on the wall, blushing shyly at autumn's steadfast gaze—in such seasons we have realised this Presence, and we have felt that all natural beauty is the garment of God. God, in the highest sense of the word: God, not, if you object to define Him, necessarily personal: but God, the first source of all things, God is the soul of the universe.

The universe is alive. Dead things have no voice: dead things could not speak to us as all the sights of Nature have spoken to the great poets, and spoken in our manner, to us. How that Presence spoke to Wordsworth when he went nutting in the woods as a boy!

“Up I rose,  
And dragged to earth both branch and bough, with crash  
And merciless ravage: and the shady nook  
Of hazels, and the green and mossy bower,  
Deformed and sullied, patiently gave up  
Their quiet being: and unless I now  
Confound my present feelings with the past,  
Even then, when from the bower I turned away  
Exulting, rich beyond the wealth of kings,  
I felt a sense of pain when I beheld  
The silent trees and the intruding sky.—  
Then, dearest maiden! move along these shades  
In gentleness of heart: with gentle hand  
Touch—for there is a spirit in the woods.”

In the enjoyment of this exalted thought, this exultant mood, the poet almost seems to attribute an actual personality to the things we see round about us. He comes upon the golden daffodils, dancing by the lake-side in the bright March weather, and *then* joy enters into his being:

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"A poet could not but be gay  
In such a jocund company."

yes, and the influence is with him in later and quieter seasons :

"For oft, when on my couch I lie,  
In vacant or in pensive mood,  
They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude ;  
And then my heart with pleasure fills  
And dances with the daffodils."

he looks on the flowers and declares

"'Tis my faith that every flower  
Enjoys the air it breathes."

and he stands on the French shore, and watches the ocean, and knows that it lives :

"Listen ! the mighty *Being* is awake,  
And doth with His eternal motion make  
A sound like thunder everlastingly."

You may say that this attributing of a kind of personality to flowers and seas is an exaggerated imagination, is a pathetic fallacy: but it is no pathetic fallacy to say that Nature is alive. It is no delusion to say that a spirit animates it: it must be so. If you took the separate chemical ingredients that make up the brain of man, you would find no life and no thought in each one of them separately: yet when they are blended and become an organism, they produce the eloquence of a Gladstone, the philosophy of a Spencer, the insight of a Wordsworth. And so if you took separately the drops of the ocean, you would not see much life, you would not see much to admire: but when they are all blended together you have the great ocean, with its movement, its laughter, its wrath: you know, you cannot doubt, but this blending has formed something entirely different in kind from each separate drop: that it is an organism: that it lives, and moves, and has its being. And so realising, as we do now, that nature is an organic

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whole: that man is not something apart from Nature, but is simply *part* of her, we are only strictly rational if we infer that the macrocosm is like the microcosm: that Nature, like man, has a soul as well as a body.

Is there any practical value in these considerations, or is the discussion academic? I believe the thought of the spirituality of the universe is helpful in several ways. Surely it gives us a natural hope—I do not say a natural assurance, but a natural hope of immortality. If this universe is in its essence spiritual, then we partake, it may be, of the eternal life of the spirit which is behind all phenomena. One view which has been suggested is, that the fact of memory is a parallel to immortality: that just as thoughts, just as the past, lingers in our mind, and still exists when it has externally ceased to be, so we may continue to exist in the same way in the mind—if we may so term it—of the infinite Spirit. At all events there is more hope in this view than in the exploded conception of a universe of dead matter: if that were so, if life came merely from inorganic form by a mechanical process, the future would indeed be dark and dreary: we should be as the beasts that perish: we might murmur at having to live out, for no purpose, our few and evil days, and say:

“For the dead man no home is:

Ah, better to be

What the flower of the foam is

On fields of the sea:

That the sea-wind might be as my raiment, the gulf-stream a garment for me.”

But now, apart from any system of theology, with which we are not at present concerned, there is a natural, rational hope and expectation that man is an immortal being.

A further consideration is, that the conception of the spirituality of the universe will put the mind into a frame of receptivity. We shall say: “Nature is alive: Nature speaks to me: I must go out to listen and learn.” We shall scarcely be content, if it be our custom to take an annual holiday, to go to some crowded

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resort, where there are bands, and minstrels, and concerts, and a fashionable throng all day through. Nay, for there human discord will be so loud that the still small voice of Nature will not be able to make itself heard. No, in this mood, we shall seek, probably, the unfrequented village, where there is little sound but the wail of the sea-bird and the eternal murmur of the waves; or some woodland region where the birds are still undisturbed in their merry concert: and then

“One impulse from a vernal wood  
My teach you more of man,  
Of moral evil and of good  
Than all the sages can,”

we shall pass not idle, but helpful moments, in the mere contemplation of some beautiful scene, waiting for the supernatural voice to sound: for

“Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum  
Of things for ever speaking,  
That nothing of itself will come,  
But we must still be seeking?”

If I may cite here, without impertinence, my own experience, I would say that I have gathered much spiritual joy from such quiet contemplation of Nature. I have stood, quite within reach of the great city, within two hours of London, I have stood, not indeed where frowning mountains lift their solemn heads, but at the limit of the fair level lands of Essex, at the edge of the almost motionless sea which washes that mysterious shore. There is no such sea, I believe, in the whole world as this: it is never insistent, never vulgar, never clamorous, but it bears landwards all the mysteries of the ages: it speaks, in quiet whisper, of that “sorrow on the sea” which entered into the Hebrew prophet's soul. The blustering seas that assault our Northern shores, the tideless sea that smiles listlessly at the vice and dissipation of the Mediterranean coast, are *banal*, commonplace, vulgar, compared with that weird and mystic ocean. On the wide coast of Britain there is nothing

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to compare with its strangeness, its mystery, its beauty. Well, I have stood there, wearied with work, oppressed with cares, needing strength for future labour: and as I stood on the confines of those wonderful waters, conscious of no distinct message, no certain voice, I have renewed my moral being, I have come away a regenerate man, with a newer and better birth than any that priests imagine to be conferred at the font by the baptismal wave.

Such blessings may come to all of us, if we will seek them where they may be found: if we will seek them, not where there are crowds, tourists, coaches, big hotels, but where Nature unfolds her sweets in peace to the quiet heart. What lesson she will impress on you I cannot say: one day, when you see the great red-rose-berries lingering in autumn, she may remind you of how the influence of a good life lives on after death: or as you move among the leafy lanes, shut in by tall hedges, in summer, she may speak to you of the need of restraint, of limitation of desire: or the falling snow may speak to you of purity, or the golden autumn's cornfields may tell you how our lives must bear fruit and feed the lives of other men. We do not know what Nature will say, but we know that if we have receptive hearts, she will speak.

To recognise the spiritual nature of the universe is, again, important, because he who does so will be in the truest sense a religious man. To be religious in that true, high sense, does not mean to be a partisan in ecclesiastical controversies, does not mean to be a stickler for form and ceremonies, does not mean to be a believer in sacramental grace: nor does it necessarily mean to have undergone a particular mental process, to have been converted, to be certain of one's own salvation. To be religious means to have the sense of awe, of reverence, of mystery; to have the law of duty written upon the heart.

The lover of Nature has pre-eminently this sense. He takes his way amid the sights and sounds of the country with a heart beating with reverent joy, and a soul filled with the instinct of wor-

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ship: he is ever questioning the meaning of things: as he gazes on the bewildering spectacle of the myriad stars at midnight, he asks with Shelley

"Where are we, and what are we? of what scene  
The actor and spectator?"

and though no cut and dried solution of ultimate mysteries comes to him, this he finds, that he must do his duty, that he must pass his brief span of life in ministering to others, and must leave the future in the hands of God. This is an essentially religious man.

And this readiness to learn, this sense of reverence, are in such a one called into play, not only in regard to purely natural things, but also in regard to the fashioned and wrought out works of man. Here, with Ruskin, we gather lessons concerning truth, beauty, power, sacrifice, obedience, from painting and sculpture; for Art is Nature modelled by man. The Divine Spirit which permeates the universe and is behind all things, pulsed in the veins of the stones when they lay unhewn in the quarry, but it has not ceased to pulse in the veins of the stones now that they are modelled and fashioned and have taken their place in the great cathedral and stately palace. The stone still lives, still is part of God, and therefore still teaches. And so no reverence for a stately building is out of place or idolatrous. Perhaps I may not bow down to graven images to worship them: but if in the dim light of chancel windows, amid the loftiness of fretted columns, I bend in adoration before the image of the thorn-crowned Redeemer, or the tender majesty of the Mother of God, I am attributing no special sacredness to these things in themselves. I reverence in them the skill of man; I reverence in them part of the life of God, and I venerate them as I venerate the beauty of the whitethorn bush, or the beauty of the wild apple in the wood.

There is yet one final consideration which arises from the thought of the spirituality of the universe, and it is this: if God is everywhere, you need not seek to find Him in any particular

### *SAINT GEORGE.*

Church or Sect. And so before the vastness of this lofty thought, ecclesiastical controversy sinks into nothingness. What concern of mine is it whether the Church of Rome or the Church of England or the Nonconformist Churches be right or wrong? It is a matter which shall not for a single moment trouble me. I will not spend anxious years in debating in what Church I can find God: I have but to go into the fields to-morrow, I have but to wander among the lanes, and I shall find God there. "Heretic," "idolator," "schismatic," then, are words which may well be allowed to drop out of our vocabulary. No one is heretic or schismatic who is seeking after God in the way of righteousness. He alone is guilty of the sin of schism whose heart does not beat in unison with the spirit of the universe.

Cultivate, then, the love of Nature, it will give you the purest joys, and it will lead you to the only discoverable truth. Let who will wrangle over sects and churches, dogmas and creeds: let who will fancy that God is a tribal God whom some man-created denomination can contain: we will escape from the close atmosphere of controversy, and breathe the pure air of heaven: we will find God in all natural beauty, for the universe is the body of God.

## REVIEWS.

*William Morris: His Art, His Writings, and His Public Life.*  
By Aymer Vallance, M.A., F.S.A. London, 1897. George Bell  
and Sons.

**W**HEN William Morris passed away, the world lost a master craftsman, a true poet and romancer, and an enlightened social reformer. In the handsome volume under notice, Mr. Vallance treats of his work in these several capacities, in an able, sympathetic, and, for the most part, a comprehensive manner. The title which the author has given to his work is important, indicating, as it does,



*Kelmscott Manor. From the Meadow at the back.*

both its scope and its limitations. This is not a record of William

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Morris's life. Such a work, as we learn from the preface, Mr. Vallance was neither asked nor authorized to write, and he submits that, with a few trifling exceptions, he has not introduced into the book any details of Mr. Morris's life which were not already com-



*Kelmscott Manor. Entrance Front.*

## REVIEWS.

mon property. Mr. Morris was himself approached on the subject of the proposed book, and whilst being unwilling for it to be written during his lifetime, he gave Mr. Vallance his sanction for the production of the work after his death, insisting that, if it came out at all, it must be illustrated, and giving him a general permission to reproduce a selection from the property of the firm of Morris & Co., providing he obtained the consent of his partners; a consent which, needless to add, was freely given. The result of this permission is that the volume is enriched by a large number of very beautiful illustrations, which are produced in a most perfect manner, and are beyond all praise. The book, in short, is produced in a manner worthy of its subject, and we can pay it no higher tribute.

William Morris was born in Walthamstow in 1834, and we are early reminded of the limitations of Mr. Vallance's work, for beyond the mere chronicle of his birth, not a word is given us respecting his parentage. His wife, too, is mentioned, we believe, only once, when in Chapter IV. his marriage with her is recorded. But if, on such subjects as these, we are denied all information, Mr. Vallance makes atonement by the way in which he deals with Morris's public life and work. Thus we have the fullest account of the origin and development of the firm of Morris & Co. The original members of the firm besides Morris were Ford Madox Brown, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Edward Burne-Jones and Arthur Hughes, painters; Philip Webb, architect; Peter Paul Marshall, district surveyor and engineer, and Charles Joseph Faulkner, an Oxford don. The chief features of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, of which the establishment of this firm was one result, are well known. The men who had banded themselves together in this manner were endowed with a conviction as to the honour of labour and the glory of true work. The business was to embody its promoters' artistic principles. They set themselves the herculean task of delivering the arts of this country from the thralldom of the ugly. A herculean task it was indeed. Mr. Vallance

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enumerates "the horrors proper to the early Victorian period—the Berlin woolwork and the bead mats; the crochet antimacassars



*Kelmscott Manor. 17th Century Carved Bedstead, with Needlework Hangings designed and worked by May Morris.*

## REVIEWS.

upon horsehair sofas; the wax flowers under glass shades; the monstrosities in stamped brass and gilded stucco; chairs, tables and other furniture hideous with veneer and curly distortions." Of course, in common with all pioneers of reform, Morris and his fellow-workers were regarded as dreamers or madmen, but they kept to their task in spite of all discouragements and difficulties, and were ultimately rewarded by a success as remarkable as it was complete. The business commenced in a very small way. Ornamented furniture and stained glass windows were its only productions at first, the cartoons for the latter being furnished by Burne-Jones. As the business prospered many developments took place. Decorative tiles, wall-papers, tapestry, chintz, carpets, were all added to the productions of the firm, which gradually attained to a position of influence unique in the history of our country. The Works are now situated at Merton Abbey, on the Wandle, and we are glad to learn that Mr. Morris took measures some years before he died to establish the firm on a secure and independent footing, so that its work might be carried on without break or hindrance in the event of his decease.

We have left ourselves but little space in which to speak of the many other departments of Morris's work. It is impossible for the reader of this record to be other than deeply impressed by the magnitude of his labours. His activity and resources seemed inexhaustible, and no obstacles seemed able to daunt his indomitable spirit. This we especially realize in tracing the history of his connection with the Socialistic movement, and however much one might dissent from his faith it is impossible not to reverence the nobility of the character, which, in obedience to conscience, was prepared to endure all things.

The poems and romances of Morris are dealt with in a very full manner, and subjected to careful analysis. Additional interest is also given by the reproduction of many of the criticisms which have from time to time appeared on his poems and other works, and more than one famous literary controversy is unearthed. As

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a poet Mr. Vallance ascribes a very high rank to Morris, and there are few, we think, to-day who will quarrel with his award.

Mr. Vallance is guilty of one remark, which we greatly regret. Throughout his book he continually has occasion to refer to the inspiration Morris derived from Ruskin, and to the influence he had upon his work. Morris acknowledged him as his master and has recorded his indebtedness to him. It is therefore with considerable surprise that we find Mr. Vallance in Chapter XII. describing Ruskin as a querulous reactionary, than which nothing could be further from the truth, and in the later editions which will doubtless be called for Mr. Vallance will be well advised in eliminating so offensive a remark.

By the kindness of Messrs. Bell we are enabled to reproduce from the work three illustrations of Kelmscott Manor.

*The Life of J. M. W. Turner, R.A. Founded on Letters and Papers Furnished by his Friends and Fellow-Academicians, by Walter Thornbury. A new edition. London, Chatto & Windus, 1897.*



ESSRS. Chatto & Windus are well advised in issuing a new edition, at a popular price, of Mr. Thornbury's *Life of Turner*. Although Mr. Ruskin's works have made many familiar with the transcendent genius of Turner, the story of his life is known to a comparatively limited number, and Mr. Thornbury's book ought to receive a warm welcome. Such a welcome it indeed deserves, for Mr. Thornbury's able work merits nothing but praise. When the desire to write Turner's life first entered his mind he resolved to take no steps until he had consulted Mr. Ruskin and ascertained whether he himself had any intention of writing the great painter's life. Mr. Ruskin had not, and gave Mr. Thornbury

## REVIEWS.

every encouragement to do so, mentioning what he considered the main characteristics of Turner which should be borne in mind, and urging him not to mask the dark side of his character. Mr. Thornbury has wisely taken this advice and has given the story of Turner's life without any concealment. It is in many respects a sad story. It will be a painful surprise to many to learn that the great painter, whose genius they worshipped, had a most unlovely side to his character, and lived the life of a "soured miser and suspicious recluse." Yet the life of this man is one which should receive and which will repay the most careful attention.

Mr. Thornbury's book contains eight coloured illustrations after Turner's originals, and two woodcuts, and although the reproduction of the former leaves something to be desired, they give an additional interest to the book.

We have received from Messrs. Methuen & Co. a copy of *The Life and Work of John Ruskin*, by W. G. Collingwood, M.A., and also *The Work of John Ruskin*, by Charles Waldstein. Both of these works have now been published for a considerable time, and it would be superfluous on our part to commend them to the thoughtful attention of all students of Ruskin. We hope it will not be long before Mr. Collingwood's scholarly biography of Ruskin is issued in a popular form. It is a most fascinating work, and all the more valuable because its author, by reason of his long connection with Mr. Ruskin, is his most competent biographer. In Professor Waldstein's book we have an independent criticism of Ruskin's teaching, and we hope, later, to deal with some of the points raised.

## NOTES.

The photogravure reproduction of Professor Herkomer's portrait of Mr. Ruskin appears as the frontispiece to this number by the courtesy of Messrs. Methuen & Co., of London, for whose kindness we are greatly indebted. Though we are not yet able to make any definite announcement, we trust that this is only the first of many such illustrations.

Mrs. S. A. Barnett (of Toynbee Hall) whose lecture before the Ruskin Society of Birmingham, on November 24th last, appears in this number, has addressed the following letter to the honorary secretary of the Society.

Warden's Lodge, Toynbee Hall,  
Whitechapel, E.

Nov. 17th, 1897.

Dear Mr. Whitehouse,

Will you allow me to remind those who so courteously listened to me last Wednesday, when I spoke of Poor Law children, that we are hoping to receive the names of many as members of the State Children's Aid Association, as I feel convinced that it is only by shewing the Government that there are many who are making demands for reforms in the life of these children, that we shall be enabled to get anything done for them.

The membership involves no pecuniary responsibility, though, of course, the Association would be glad to have donations as a sign of the appreciation and interest of the public. All that we ask the members is, that they should do what they can to spread our views, and to direct the public attention to, and awaken the public conscience in, the welfare of this large and unfortunate class.

## NOTES.

The address of the State Children's Aid Association office is 61, Old Broad Street, E.C., and letters can be addressed either to me, or to the honorary secretary, Mrs. Rye.

Believe me,

Yours truly,

(Signed) H. O. BARNETT.

We very earnestly commend this letter to the attention of our readers, and trust that Mrs. Barnett will have a wide response to her request.

The attention of members of the Ruskin Society is directed to the fact that Dean Farrar's lecture on March 9th next will be delivered in the Town Hall, the use of which has been kindly granted by the Lord Mayor. Members are also asked to note that Mr. James G. Borland, the President of the Glasgow Ruskin Society, will lecture on January 26th next. Mr. Borland was prevented by illness from lecturing on December 8th, as arranged, and his place was taken by Mr. Montague Fordham. Our readers will find a list of the lectures which have still to be delivered this Session in another portion of this number, and we would direct the special attention of non-members of the Society to that list.

The following extract from a recent letter received from Mr. W. G. Collingwood, M.A., will be of general interest:

"I am glad to say that Mr. Ruskin's health is much as it has been during these later years. He still takes his daily walks, sees his personal friends, and spends much time in reading. But it does not seem to be understood by the public that this comparative health depends upon his being kept from all unnecessary work. He directs his own business, but is obliged to decline correspondence, and cannot reply to the many letters which still come asking for his intervention in public matters, or for private advice and assistance."